

2001 being a Saturday, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked up" version pursuant to 1.121):

A1
Sub
C2

10. (Amended) A wire bonding method, comprising the steps of:

forming a bond pad made from an interconnect material on a semiconductor substrate;

encapsulating said bond pad with a passivation layer;

bonding a wire onto the passivation layer, wherein the wire is more metallurgically stable than the interconnect material;

wherein a portion of the passivation layer forms a metallurgical bond with the interconnect material; and

wherein a mechanical and electrical connection is provided between the interconnect material and the wire, with the passivation layer disposed therebetween.

Add the following claim:

A2 Sub E

~~21. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of depositing the tantalum (Ta) layer encapsulates the copper (Cu) bond pad.~~